



**American  
Red Cross**

**Everyone Is Welcome**

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# A place to go when there is no place to go



# The Red Cross Commitment

*“The Red Cross is firmly committed to serving the needs and interests of all people, including those with disabilities, throughout all lines of service, at all times, and in every way.”*

**Gail McGovern**

**President and CEO of the American Red Cross**

# Why Is This So Important?

In 2010, nearly 57 million U.S. residents – roughly 1 in 5 - identified themselves as living with some type of disability. In order to meet the needs of **everyone** in the community, the Red Cross is focusing on improving service to individuals with access and functional needs, including those with disabilities.

# Defining Access & Functional Needs

As co-leads for Mass Care and the federal and CA State levels, Red Cross utilizes FEMA's definition of those who may experience access and functional needs as a diverse cross-section of the whole community:

*“Individuals who have developmental or intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, chronic conditions, injuries, limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking, older adults, children, people living in institutionalized settings, those who are low income, homeless and/or transportation disadvantaged (i.e., dependent on public transit) and those who are pregnant.”*

# Delivering Quality Services

## **LISTEN TO CLIENTS AND LET THEIR WORDS GUIDE YOUR ACTIONS**

The American Red Cross is fully committed to:

- Providing equal access to all services, and support for everyone
- Listening to each client and acting on their words to see that their needs are met
- Focusing on clients having the tools necessary to maintain their usual level of independence
- Complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act, commonly known as the ADA

# Serving The Whole Community

People with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs:

- Have the same right to participation, the same range of options, degree of freedom, control and self-determination in everyday life and life projects that other citizens take for granted. (Equal Access)
- Must be able to access the built world, including shelters and other service delivery sites. (Physical Access)
- Must be able to access programs and services that are available to everyone else, such as sheltering and feeding. (Programmatic Access)
- Must be provided the same information as everyone else, in a manner as effective as information given to the general public. (Effective Communications)

# Physical Access and Reasonable Accommodation

Some facilities may require modifications to allow for full physical access, such as placement of temporary ramps and wheelchair-accessible toilets, showers or handwashing stations.

Clients and staff may require other reasonable accommodations in order to maintain their independence, health and safety.



# Reasonable Accommodation



- The way we ask questions of clients
- Assisting with printed materials and forms
- Sharpening our listening and feedback skills
- Durable medical equipment
- Placement of cots
- Supply of stable cots
- Providing a quiet room
- Providing appropriate meals and snacks
- Providing fragrance-free products

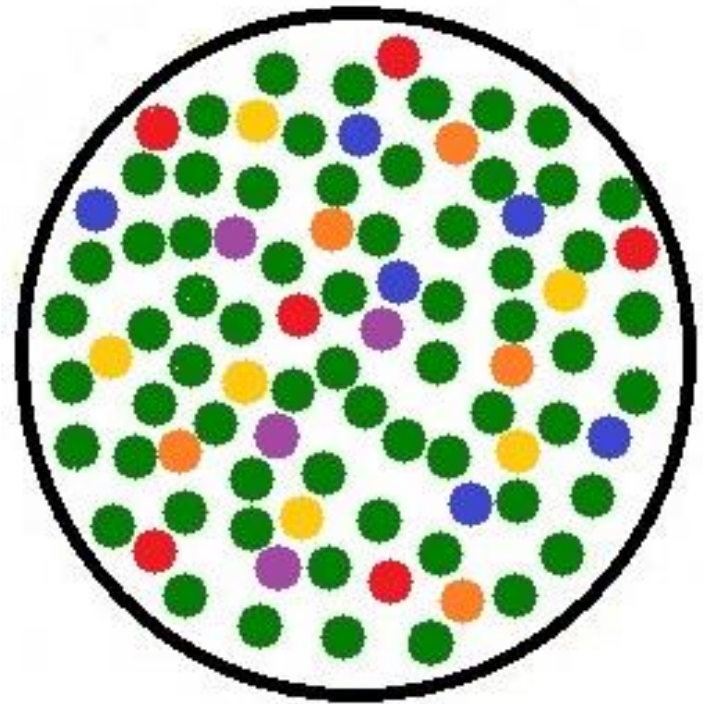
# Integration, Inclusion – What's It Mean?

## Integration:

- Incorporating access and functional needs support into all disaster services, with an end goal of...

## Inclusion:

- Being a part of the whole community by being welcomed, and feeling that you belong



# Ask > Listen > Learn

We all want essentially the same things, including:

- A safe way to evacuate
- A safe place to shelter
- To stay in the general community shelter with our families and caregivers
- To have fair and equal access to service delivery sites, programs, and communications
- [Get to know us – we don't bite!](#) (click to watch the video!)

# What is Independent Living?



A Movement



A Culture



A Program



# Identifying Access & Functional Needs

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## Some examples of services

- Persons who have lost their homes in the context of evacuation need direct support.
- Think about the needs of the community. Does the family or the family member need support?
- Does a family member need support?

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To maintain health of the clients, the following

Having the means to get around the

community to get to work or to

appointments is an important aspect of

independent living. It's up to you to

assist those that may need

transportation to dialysis, physical

therapy, or physician appointments. It's

imperative that your region looks into

the community's plan for transportation

after a disaster.

\*CMIST model developed 2012 by Jun

# Self-Determination

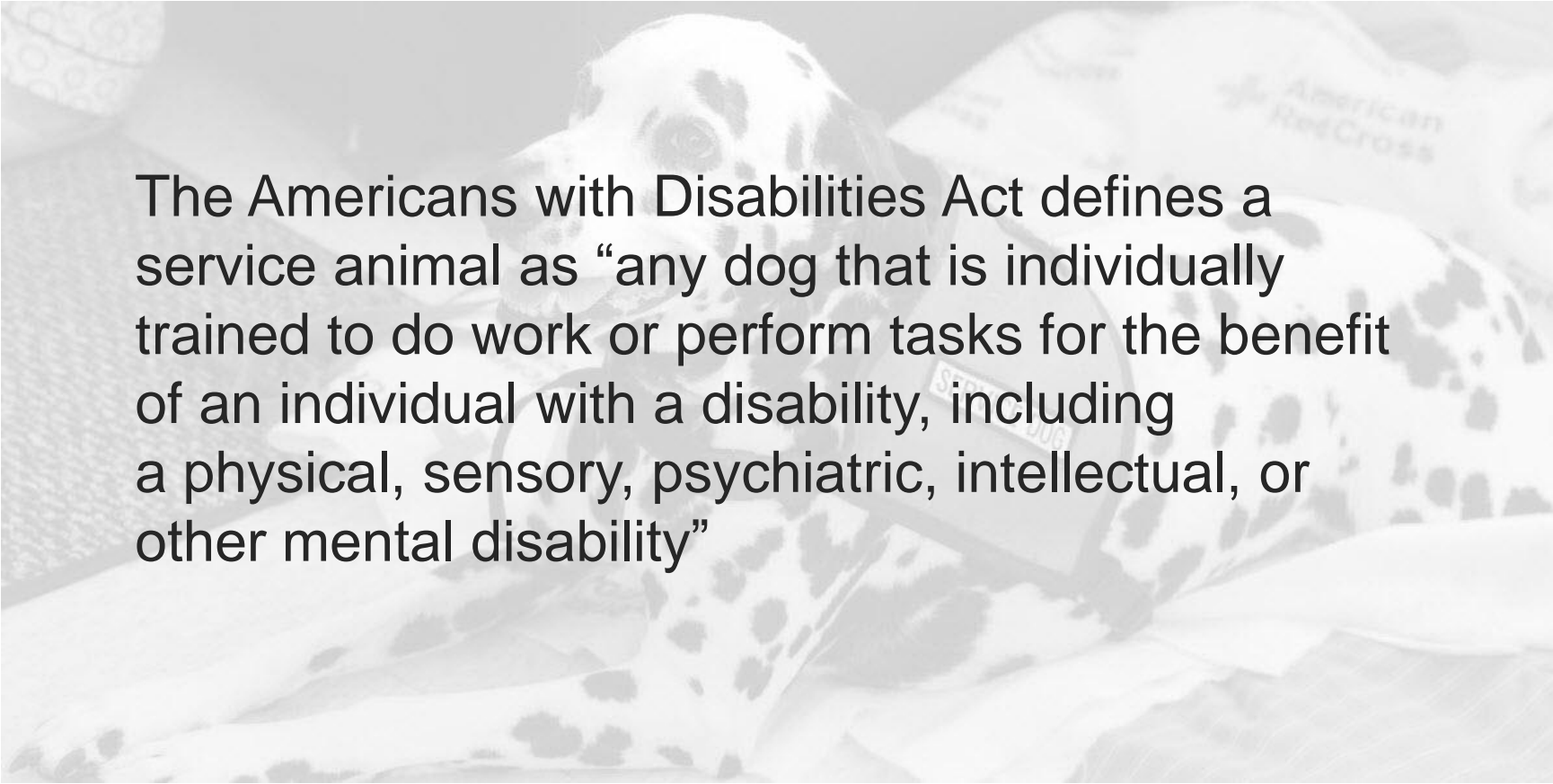
Our clients and our workforce, including those with disabilities, are the most knowledgeable about their own needs, and how they go about their activities of daily living within their home and community environment.

***Ask*** Individuals How  
You Can Assist

***Listen*** to Their  
Answers

***Let Their Words  
Guide Your Actions***

# Service Animals Must Be Admitted Into Red Cross Shelters



The Americans with Disabilities Act defines a service animal as “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability”

# What We May Ask About Service Animals

Only two questions can be asked of a client with a service animal:

1. Is this a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or tasks has the animal been trained to perform?



# What We May Not Ask or Do Regarding Service Animals

Shelter staff may **NOT**:

- Require special identification for the animal, e.g. a collar, leash, harness or apparel marked with “Service Animal”, “Guide Dog”, etc.
- Ask about the person’s disability
- Refuse admittance, isolate, segregate, or treat the person less favorably than other clients
- Restrict the person’s access to public areas where food is being served

# Service Animal Behavior

A service animal's owner/handler is responsible for the animal's care and feeding, as well as cleaning up behind it in the event the animal has an "accident."

A person with a disability cannot be asked to remove their service animal from the premises unless:

- **The animal is out of control and the animal's owner does not take effective action to control it**
- **The animal poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others**



# Focus on the Individual

- Ask if assistance is needed. Listen to the answer and act accordingly
- Assess surroundings with clients/volunteers and discuss safety needs
- Ask about durable medical equipment and assistive technology needs, and be ready to provide replacements or additional items
- Discuss any unique dietary considerations, utensils, or other feeding needs, such as assistance with cutting food
- Inquire about other needs for assistance, such as dressing, bathing, or toileting



# Identify Resources, Build Relationships

- Work with local partners to provide a framework for cooperation between the organizations in rendering services to the communities
- Establish relationships with providers and organizations to identify how they can support client needs in a general population shelter
- Train and exercise with organizations to learn how each operates and establish best practices for serving the whole community
- Learn more about Disability Integration in your chapter or region by emailing your questions to [accessibility@redcross.org](mailto:accessibility@redcross.org)

# **Everyone Means Everyone!**

## **Get to Yes!**

## **Be Nice!**



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**Questions?**